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ABSTRACT

The World Wide Web has a wealth of information on career planning, individual jobs, and job search methods that counselors and teachers can use. Search engines such as Yahoo! and Magellan, organized like library tools, and engines such as AltaVista and HotBot search words or phrases. Web indexes offer a variety of features. The criteria for evaluating Web sites are similar to those for evaluating any instructional resource: authority; layout, design, and accessibility; links; content; and information structure and design. Web sites that relate to career education and job search include America's Job Bank, CareerMosaic, CareerPath, E-Span's Job Options, and The Monster Board. Ways to use the Internet in career education include the following: access to information; direct access to computer-assisted guidance; distance counseling; group work; access and outreach; and recruitment, placement, and the job search. Learning job search strategies ranks high with students, so it is important that they keep up to date with the latest in job search technology. Many academic and professional services have developed websites that address the needs of students who are just beginning their career development process. (Contains 10 references.) (KC)

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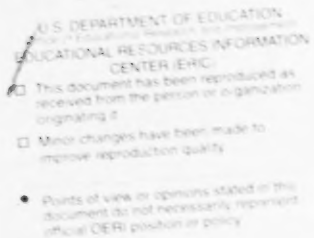
Practice Application Brief No. 1

Judith O. Wagner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ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

by Judith O. Wagner

PRACTICE APPLICATION 1999
BRIEF NO. 1

Using the Internet in Career Education

If job seekers or career counselors choose not to participate in using the Internet as a key tool in career development, they may be cheating themselves and their clients. (Henshaw 1997, p. 4)

The World Wide Web has a plethora of information that counselors and teachers can use about career planning, individual jobs, and searching for a job. This *Brief* includes information on identifying, evaluating, selecting, and using the Internet in the career education classroom.

Identifying Websites

Search engines and publications will lead you to myriad sources of information on career education. Once sites have been identified, they can be bookmarked for future reference. Because websites often disappear or change their address, it is important to search the World Wide Web at intervals to make sure your information is current.

Search engines and Web indexes offer a variety of features. Indexes such as Yahoo! <www.yahoo.com/> and Magellan <www.mckinley.com> are organized and evaluated and are like familiar library tools. Engines such as AltaVista™ <altavista.digital.com/> and HotBot <www.hotbot.com/> search words or phrases; some have advanced features that allow for more precise retrieval of information. It is important to consult the "help" section of any search tool to learn about idiosyncracies and defaults (*Information Management* 1998).

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education <ericacve.org/> has developed several publications that include information about websites, such as *Information Management* (1998) and Wagner (1999). Listservs such as VOCNET (vocnet@cmsa.berkeley.edu) have subscribers who are always willing to share their experiences and expertise and a request will bring a wealth of information.

Evaluating Websites

The criteria for evaluating websites are much the same as evaluating any instructional resource (Sowards 1997; Symonds 1998; Wilkinson, Bennett, and Oliver 1997):

- Authority. Who developed the website/document? Is the author/institution identified with name, address, credentials? Does it show the date it was updated?
- Layout, design, and accessibility. Is the site easy to use? Is it well organized? Does the user have control of options such as frames and text only? Is there a site map? Is there a subscription fee? Can the material from the site be downloaded in a reasonable amount of time?
- Links. Are links sufficiently identified? Are they arranged logically? Are they current? Are they reliable?
- Content. Is the content consistent with the purpose of the site? Is it appropriate for the Web as a medium? Is it appropriate for its intended audience? Is the content relevant? Is the methodology described and appropriate? Has the document been peer reviewed? Is there a bibliography? Are there obvious errors in content?
- Information structure and design. Does the website follow accepted instructional design standards (purpose, scope, interactivity, format)?

Selecting Websites

Websites that relate to career education and the job search abound on the Internet. The time has come when the Web is an essential tool for those looking for any type of job. Although no one website includes all the elements of a job search, there are several, known as the "big board," that can give beginners a start. These sites include the following (Wagner 1999):

America's Job Bank <www.ajb.dni.us/>. Announces thousands of job openings, links to state search engines, and connects job seekers to employer-maintained job listings.

CareerMosaic <www.careermosaic.com/>. Has information on available jobs, employers, resume writing, job fairs, a career resource center, the college connection, and an international gateway.

CareerPath <careerpath.com>. Combines help-wanted listings from 63 newspapers throughout the country.

E-Span's Job Options <www.joboptions.com/esp/plsql/espan_enter.espan_home>. Provides the capability to search for a job, post a resume, search for employer information, and subscribe to a job alert service.

The Monster Board <www.monster.com/> (formerly Online Career Center). Provides resources to manage careers, track job searches, store resumes and cover letters, and connect to a global careers community.

A Web search will lead you to hundreds of sites that cover all aspects of career development. In addition to those mentioned, there are websites related to employment agencies, job fairs, job matching services, newspapers, resume services, employment magazines and newsletters, and international employment (Wagner 1999). Career counselors can use these resources to advise their clients (Henshaw 1997).

Using the Internet

The Internet can be used in career education in a number of ways (Offer and Watts 1997):

- Access to information. The Internet offers an enormous amount of information and career counselors can provide a filtering, quality assurance service.
- Direct access to computer-assisted guidance. A full range of computer-assisted systems is available online.
- Distance counseling. E-mail and video conferencing provide a powerful medium for delivering distance guidance.
- Group work. E-mail and newsgroups offer opportunities for group counseling.
- Access and outreach. The Internet allows access to people in new ways and places such as their own homes and workplaces.

- Recruitment, placement, and the job search. The Internet offers postings of available jobs, application forms, electronic submission of resumes, and websites that teach job-seeking skills.

In preparing this *Brief*, a message was sent to VOCNET, a vocational education listserv, asking how people were using the Internet in career education. Responses included—

- Going to <www.newwork.com> to review major stories related to work and education and to link to other websites (R. Feller, Internet message, January 20, 1999)
- Purchasing the bridges online service <cx.bridges.com/> (C.M. Hoyt, Internet message, January 19, 1999)
- Conducting scavenger hunts for websites and information related to emergency medicine; having students who are job shadowing locate programs in pharmacy (K. Blondeau, Internet message, January 19, 1999)
- Using the state career information system that provides basic job search information and links to Internet job banks (N. Peterson, Internet message, January 19, 1999)
- Accessing BC WorkInfoNet <www.workinfonet.ca/cwn/english/main.html> and Worksearch <www.gc.worksearch.ca> in Canada (J. Pasquale, Internet message, January 22, 1999; S. Conger, Internet message January 27, 1999)
- Doing research for classes by students and teachers (C. McClain, Internet message, January 20, 1998)
- Teaching students how to conduct an online job search and communicating links and other information (V. Wise-Neely, Internet message, January 22, 1998)
- Searching ERIC and gleaning information from listservs and other resources (L. Olsen, Internet message, January 20, 1998)

Learning job search strategies ranks high with student so it is important that they keep up to date with the latest in job search technology. A business education or communications course is a good place to discuss preparing a scannable resume, preparing an online resume, using the Internet in employment communication, and conducting mock interviews (Andrews and Dyrud 1997).

Academic and professional programs as well as career services offices at many colleges and universities have developed websites that address the needs of clients who are just beginning their career development process. Organizations maintain listservs that include pertinent information about career and professional development issues. The advantage of listservs is that responses come from a widely divergent group of people (Stevens and Lundberg 1998).

The University of Pennsylvania Career Service's website <www.upenn.edu/CPPS/> includes information about career development activities as well as about employers and occupations. Professional association websites include links to a variety of career information that is relevant to counselors, students, and others seeking career information. Relevant sites include the National Association of Colleges and Employers/JobWeb <www.jobweb.org> and the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee <www.noicc.gov>. Career counselors should be aware of the emerging technologies related to career planning and development and begin to use them with their clients. Counselors can help develop or improve Internet-based systems by working with an organization to develop career intervention services; collecting data related to career applications of the Internet; hosting a listserv or chat room; or becoming a critic/reviewer of Internet-based applications (Carson and Cartwright 1997).

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